USE OF BRONZE FOR MONUMENTS.

THE NELSON COLUMN, LONDON.

With regard to the remarks on the Nelson column, adopted in your last number, from a clever contemporary, I venture to send you a varied impression. I admit the unexampled sloth by which that proceeding has been characterized, and say with the *Observer*, "It is hoped, it is entreated, of the Government that they will, without any longer delay, give orders for the completion of this monument, which, as it now stands, is a satire upon the sea service, and a memento of national ingratitude to departed heroism, rather than a symbol of naval glory."

The point, however, to which I am desirous of drawing attention is the ready violation of the canons of art for the mere purpose of spicing a critique. Thus bronze,—the vehicle celebrated throughout all history, the forerunner of marble in the hands of the sculptor, and ever a favourite material,—is to be abandoned, except for cabinet *morceaux* or large single objects; but for compositions such as those on the pedestal of the Nelson column, some 14 feet square, having the chief figures of natural or heroic size, with the limbs and accessories frequently detached, and in some instances almost the entire figure, bronze is to be no longer admissible.

But what is to be the succedaneum? I fear it would be difficult to point to a material that would afford equal facilities. The inferior applicability of stone to minute parts is exemplified in the bronze sword of Bailey's figure at the top; and unless in some such ductile non-absorbent and imperishable substance as the one employed for the *relievi*, much of their finish and detail must have been omitted.

The local or pervading colour of material, wholly unrecognized in architecture, is of very little consequence to the sculptor; a monochrome in lampblack is as powerful as one in gamboge, and so thought the authors of the *black marble* centaurs of the *capitol*.

Bronze, for the ornamental part of the Nelson capital, was probably adopted from necessity,—it would never have been so well done in granite; but while it now holds in some aspects an intense depth of shade, it becomes, under the ordinary play of light, so perfectly distinct that the markings of the leaves are as perceptible as those of the wreath on the granite torus immediately below the shaft.

As to the recommendation for distorting the base, surely some better and more analogous authority should be adduced than the puny, not to say hypothetical, interior order at Bassæ, whose chief characteristic is its unparalleled eccentricity. MODERATOR.

THE "OLD HALL" AT GAINSBOROUGH.

Passing through Gainsborough a few days since, I went to see how the "restorations" were progressing at the "old hall" (a distinctive name this fine old building took when the Hickman family removed to the new hall at Thonack). The "old hall" is one of the few remaining wood and plaster buildings erected towards the close of the fifteenth century, and though it has been much neglected, it is in a pretty good state of preservation. The general plan of the building is three sides of a quadrangle, one of which is wholly occupied by the great hall, till lately encumbered with all the paraphernalia of a theatre,—the minstrel gallery serving for a dressing, and the fine oriel for a green-room. The hall is open to the roof, which has a lantern, and principals supported by arched ribs; the latter once sprung from carved corbels, not one of which are now remaining, having been removed one by one as they were found to stand in the way of the theatrical arrangements; and I believe there are those in the town who could tell where some, at least, of these corbels are yet to be found, and they might (if too much decayed to be reinstated) serve as models for new ones. All the windows towards the inner area are of oak, some projecting 7 or 8 inches from the face of the building, with cills, cornices, mullions, &c., nicely moulded, as also tracery in the upper part probably 1½ inch or 2 inches thick, giving them a screen-like appearance. These and several other windows have only of late been freed from the lath and plaster with which for generations they have been blocked up. The warder's tower (a fine piece of brickwork), and the brick front towards the east, as well as the offices towards the west, appear to have been additions made about the beginning or middle of the sixteenth century.

It is a pity so rich a relic of bygone days should be restored so superficially as this appears to be: for instance, the oak mouldings, carvings, &c., where decayed, are being patched with deal, and plaster ornament has been used for "beautifying" the stone fire-places. You will probably not wonder at this when told, as I was, that "the whole of the works" were under the superintendence of a resident lawyer; and still it is surprising, when we know that men of acknowledged taste in these matters (and one, at least, a distinguished archæologist) reside in the immediate neighbourhood. J.

ANCIENT BELL-RINGERS' RHYMES.

HATHERSAGE CHURCH.

The following is a literal copy of an inscription in the black letter, in the belfry of Hathersage Church, Derbyshire. It was written about the year 1650, by one Anthony Frith, clerk of the parish, and whose family have held the office ever since. Perhaps you may think it worthy of insertion among the curiosities of your journal.

"You gentlemen that here intend to ring,
See that these laws you keep in every thing,
Or els be sure you must without delay
The penalty thereof to th' ringers pay.
First when you do into the belhouse come,
Look that the ringers have convenient room,
For if you be an hindrance unto them,
Four pence you forfeit to these gentlemen;
Next if you do intend here for to ring,
With hat or spurs on, do not touch a string,
For if you do, your forfeit is for that,
First 4 pence down to pay, and loose your hat.
If you a bell turn o're, without delay
Four pence unto the ringers you must pay:
Or if you strike, miscall, or do abuse,
You must pay 4 pence for the ringers' use.
For every oath here sworn, ere you go hence
Unto the poor then, you must pay twelve pence.
And if that you desire to be enrould
A ringer here, these orders keep and hold,
But whoso doth these orders disobey
Unto the stocks wee will him take straight way,
There to remain untill that hee be willing
To pay his forfeit, and the clark a shilling."

The church is about undergoing a thorough restoration under the care of Mr. Butterfield. There are several good brasses in the church, but these the present representative of the Frith family will *not allow of being* copied by any one but himself, and for which he charges a very respectable price. C. H. B.

WHAT MUST WE DO?*

Will the pestilence, which is now rapidly abating in the metropolis, disappear for good in a few weeks? or will it smoulder in the population during the winter, and burst forth again with renewed virulence on the recurrence of the summer heats? The answer to this question depends on the use which we may make of the respite afforded by the coming frosts. If we employ the next five or six months in resolute exertions, well directed, and well sustained, to cleanse and purify the squalid low-lying districts of London;—if we get rid of the two millions and a quarter cubic feet of ordure (just about one cubic foot per man) in the midst of which we live;—if we divert to rural cemeteries the thousands of corpses that knock weekly at our metropolitan church-doors—pale applicants for lodging in the vaults below;—if we purge with ventilating air-holes, and wash with preparations of lime, all such horrible "pest-houses" as that of 48, Half Moon-street (mentioned in a recent report of the city medical officer)—"the filthy, stinking, airless residence of fourteen families, never free from fever;" or that at 4, Hartshorn-court, where nine unhappy outcasts lie rotting "in the midst of cholera and diarrhœa" in one small and stinking room;—if we stop at their source the subterranean rivers of filth and blood that take their rise from Smithfield-market and Whitechapel shambles;—if we explore and evacuate the hideous caves of Aldgate and Tyler's-market, where underground slaughterers, red-armed, and ankle-deep in putrid garbage, ply their loathsome trade;—if the black tidal ditches of Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, and Lambeth, those chosen haunts of pestilence, be cleansed at length and covered;—if, instead of the scanty and intermittent supplies of water now doled out to us at extravagant charges by corporate monopolists, we agitate for free continuous streams, at constant pressure and at reasonable price;—if, profiting at length by the terrible teaching of experience, we thus set to work in good earnest to improve the sanitary condition of London, instead of leaving it, as it actually is, worse off for air, light, water, drainage, &c., than in 1832, taking into account the increase of building and population;—then, but not otherwise, we may hope that the pestilence, now only remitting, will be finally subdued,—then, but not otherwise, we may reasonably expect that just as at Dulwich, fever was recently arrested by flushing out the drains—just as in the Long-alley district, where 500 cases of typhus occurred within six months, one passage, lately cleaned, has since remained exempt from the epidemic raging around it—and just as in a street of Hammersmith, epidemic diarrhœa, previously severe, entirely disappeared after the emptying of an overflowing cesspool—so in all London, similarly purified, a similar exemption from preventible diseases may ensue.

* From the *Times*.

Miscellanea.

The Advance of Iron-working in England is a subject for congratulation, and should be aided by architects to the extent of their power. The current number of the *Journal of Design* says on the subject of iron:—This most valuable metal may be called almost the direct agent of man in whatever he undertakes. In agriculture, manufacture, the building of ships, &c., this was early seen, and therefore its use is of very high antiquity, although not so remote, we have reason to believe, as that of either gold, silver, or copper. The inferior brilliancy of its colour may, perhaps, in some degree, account for this circumstance, as well as the greater skill required to obtain it from its ores and apply it to purposes of art. While gold and silver glitter often in their native state, and the ores of copper are of brilliant colour, the less apparent but more useful iron in its ore or native state holds out few of these lures to the finder. The native colour is still gray, and it is found in masses sometimes of meteoric origin; it also occurs in the state of pyrites, magnetic ironstone, ochry ironstone, &c. &c. It is, as we know well, a malleable and ductile metal, susceptible of very high polish, especially when united in a peculiar manner with carbon, in which state it is called steel; and this most useful combination must, we suppose, be of remote origin, for iron is mentioned repeatedly in the Pentateuch as employed for the fabrication of swords, knives, and various other sharp-edged instruments. We may estimate in some degree the value that was then attached to it from an expression in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, where Moses tells the Israelites, in his descriptive eulogy of the land of promise, that it is "a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills they may dig brass." An illustration of the same fact, at a later date, occurs in the *Iliad*, where Achilles proposes a ball of iron as one of the prizes to be distributed at the games instituted in honour of Patroclus. Within a few centuries after this, the working of this metal seems to have arrived at much perfection, as Herodotus speaks of a saucer of iron, very curiously inlaid, that was presented by a king of Lydia to the Delphic oracle, and adds, that "it is of surprising workmanship, and as worthy of observation as any of the offerings preserved at Delphi."

Sediment in Cisterns.—A correspondent says,—"Allow me to propose to those who like pure water, to have the bottom of their cistern shaped conically, with the discharging-pipe attached to the extremity: thus no sediment could be formed; and when the water was agitated by a fresh supply it would still be as clear as ever." This would prevent sediment, but not give *pure water*.

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